



National

# POISON PREVENTION WEEK PLANNER



[www.PoisonHelp.hrsa.gov](http://www.PoisonHelp.hrsa.gov)

## TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL ACTIVITY AND EVENT PLANNING

By hosting events in conjunction with your local Poison Center in observance of *National Poison Prevention Week*, you will help educate your community about poisoning prevention. **Contact your local Poison Center through the national toll-free Poison Help line, 1-800-222-1222, to find out what activities they are conducting and how you can partner with them.** Your local Poison Center can also give you ideas and provide you with resources to support your own event. The following recommendations will also help you plan successful events.

### Coordinate With Other *National Poison Prevention Week* Activities

Contact your local Poison Center by calling **1-800-222-1222** to learn about other *National Poison Prevention Week* activities and how you can support these activities. Here are some examples of other organizations you can collaborate with (your Poison Center may already have relationships with these types of organizations):

- Local radio and TV stations
- Community organizations, including religious entities, civic groups, fraternities and sororities, and recreation leagues and organizations
- Medical, emergency support, and public health groups
- Education-related organizations, including day care centers, libraries, colleges and universities, and parent-teacher associations
- Businesses, including baby product stores, toy stores, grocery stores, maternity stores, and drug stores/pharmacies

See the “Introduction” within this planner for tips on partnering with your Poison Center and other groups to extend the reach of your *National Poison Prevention Week* activities.

### Choosing an Audience and Activity/Event Type

Successful activities and events consider the needs of the community. For example, if your community is largely bilingual, prepare bilingual materials and have bilingual speakers. If your community has a large senior citizen population, avoid holding your event at night and hold your event at a venue that is handicapped-accessible. To learn more about your community’s needs, contact your Poison Center.

Here are some ideas for ways you can reach people of various ages during *National Poison Prevention Week* and beyond.



### Children

Since the leading causes of poison exposures involve cosmetics, cleaning products, and medicines for children under age 6, an effective event might target those who provide care for children or provide parents and caretakers with information on health care. Targeted audiences could include:

- School-aged children
- Parents and child care providers
- Teenagers/babysitters
- Grandparents/older adults
- Pediatricians and emergency service personnel

Consider reaching these audiences by offering the poison facts included in this planner (such as “Poison Centers—Making the Right Call” and “Frequently Asked Questions”) to your local PTA, Boy and Girl Scout troops, parenting classes, and babysitting classes. Poison Centers also have a variety of resources available for your use. Working with your Poison Center, offer to speak at these groups’ meetings to explain common poisoning risks and what to do if a potential poisoning occurs.

### Preteens/Teens

Use of inhalants—household products that are sniffed to get high—among youth in this country is a growing concern, as is prescription drug abuse. The National Inhalant Prevention Coalition and the Partnership for a Drug Free America have reported inhalant use increases of 18 percent among 8th graders and 44 percent among 6th graders. An effective event might be to hold a school assembly with skits that focus on the harm and dangers involved with using inhalants and other drugs.

### Adults

More than 70 percent of all poison deaths related to prescription pain killer abuses occur in adults ages 20 to 59. Consider working with your Poison Center to partner with local businesses and organizations to provide resources on poisoning prevention to their employees, such as by hanging posters in common areas. Also, work with local pharmacies to distribute medication safety information.

### Older Adults

Older adults are more likely than others to die from poisonings due to medication errors. While these adults account for 5 percent of possible poisonings, they account for 16 percent of poison-related deaths. With your Poison Center, partner with local senior centers to hold programs that review medication safety, such as making a list of all medications taken to share with physicians, ensuring that medications are kept locked up away from children, not sharing medications, and taking them as directed.

### Specific Ideas for Events and Activities

Tailor your *National Poison Prevention Week* activities to your needs and available resources. Any activity, large or small, can make a difference. If you and your Poison Center have limited resources, here are a few simple activities that do not require large amounts of time or funding:

- Post general facts about poisoning and Poison Center resources—including in this planner—on your Web site, and link to the national Poison Help Web site, [www.PoisonHelp.hrsa.gov](http://www.PoisonHelp.hrsa.gov), to provide your community with additional information.
- Call your local radio stations and ask them to read the live-read public service announcements included in this planner during *National Poison Prevention Week*.
- Distribute the poison facts included in this planner to businesses, schools, and other community groups, and encourage them to share this information with others.
- Hold a brown bag lunch at work to educate coworkers and your employer about potential workplace poisoning risks.

In addition, consider the following ideas:

#### **Hold a Local *National Poison Prevention Week* Poster Contest**

Many Poison Centers invite children in the community to create a poster that can be used to educate the public about poisoning. If budget allows, work with your Poison Center to host a reception or awards program to recognize participants and present prizes. Don't forget to invite the media for coverage of the event. To broaden your resources, seek sponsors or donations from local businesses, especially those that you contract with for services.

You can also encourage people in your community to enter the *National Poison Prevention Week* poster contest held nationwide. For more suggestions and guidelines, visit [www.poisonprevention.org/poster.htm](http://www.poisonprevention.org/poster.htm).

#### **Host a Poison First-Aid Class**

Work with your local Poison Center to obtain teaching materials so you can coordinate a first-aid class focused on poisoning for your community and workplace.

#### **Partner with Your Local Poison Center to Coordinate a Tour**

Depending on the feasibility of doing so at your local Poison Center, consider holding a picnic outside of the facility followed by a small-group tour. Another idea is to collaborate with local schools to offer a tour of your local Poison Center as a field trip, if your Poison Center is equipped to offer tours.

#### **Conduct a Community Health Fair**

Invite your Poison Center, local health professionals, firefighters, police officers, Boy Scout and Girl Scout troop leaders, 4-H Club leaders, and others to set up booths about poison prevention.

### With Guidance from your Poison Center, Create a Look-Alike Display

With the help of your Poison Center, create a look-alike display that shows a variety of potentially poisonous items that look almost identical to non-poisonous items. Examples can be found at [The Missouri Regional Poison Center](#). Showcase the display (with permission) in local libraries, schools, and government buildings.

### Hold a Pharmaceutical Take-Back Program or Event

Unwanted and outdated pharmaceuticals pose serious safety and environmental threats, ranging from child poisonings and illegal use to contamination of our streams and drinking water. Work with your Poison Center and local law enforcement to coordinate a free and safe disposal of unwanted, unneeded, and expired medications. Controlled substances require special handling and law enforcement must be involved.

### Planning Effective Events in Conjunction with Your Poison Center

- *Start your planning by contacting your Poison Center right away.* Based on your combined numbers and manpower, decide how large your event can be and how many people you will need on hand to help. Together, hold a planning meeting to establish roles and responsibilities, organize material creation and distribution to attendees, select and book a venue based on the size of your event, outline your publicity and media outreach plans (see “Promoting Your *National Poison Prevention Week* Events”), and make other accommodations, such as how you will handle media requests or record the audience’s comments, if needed.
- *Choose a location that easily accommodates members of the media and people with special needs.* Some possible venues for your event include your local Poison Center, police station, firehouse, hospital, health clinic, YMCA, library, YWCA, town hall, community center, church, synagogue, elementary school, college, or university.
- *If there will be a formal program, provide speakers, moderators, and other participants with an agenda for the event.* Ask that they arrive at least a half-hour early. If possible, designate a private space where they can prepare.
- *Be prepared for last-minute changes.* Secure a back-up venue, especially if your event is outdoors. Make sure to include alternative locations in your correspondence with attendees, speakers, moderators, and the media. Also secure a back-up speaker, in case your keynote speaker cancels unexpectedly.
- *Remind speakers to prepare speeches that will not exceed the allotted time frame.* If possible, obtain copies of their speeches beforehand to avoid repetition and to ensure that multiple perspectives on poison prevention are highlighted. Allowing time for audience interaction is important. It is also a good idea to allow a brief window of time for overlap or logistical changes.

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